

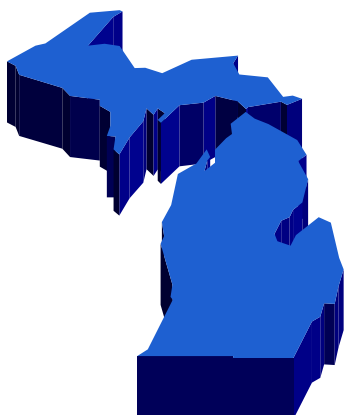
Issue # 2

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The Monthly Minute *with State Senator John Pappageorge*

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Dear Friend:

I write to you at a critical time in our state's history. Recently, the Governor introduced her Fiscal Year (FY) 2008 budget which begins on October 1st of this year. It places a huge new tax burden on the residents of Michigan. Specifically, her plan called for:

- a 2 % excise tax on services, which would generate \$1.5 billion for the state to fund a bevy of new programs that promise something for just about everybody;
- a 5-cent increase in the cigarette tax;
- a 10 percent markup (the percentage of the profit of sales that the state takes) on liquor (from 65 to 75 percent);
- a new tax on vending machine food and international calls; and
- fee increases for various licenses-hunting, fishing, etc.

Overall, the Governor's budget will raise your taxes and is expected to increase revenue to the state by an alarming \$318 million over the current budget. Speaking of the current budget, which ends on September 30th of this year, it's \$943 million in the hole. So, before we even address next year's budget, we have to balance this year's. The Governor, in her Executive Order, proposed covering the gap with 55% in tax increases, 4.5% in cuts and the rest in payment deferrals and other gimmicks.

I am proud to report that as Vice Chairman of the Appropriations Committee, I and my Republican colleagues rejected the Governor's Executive Order. The Governor has 30 days from the date of our rejection to produce a new Executive Order. Hence, negotiations between the Senate and the Governor have begun.

At times like these, it is necessary to put aside political differences to find solutions that will change the way we do business. I am fully committed to this task. Michigan is facing a structural deficit. Raising your taxes will not solve the long term economic troubles we're experiencing. I will continue to work with the Governor and the House of Representatives to find a solution to Michigan's budget woes without placing a further burden on you, the taxpayer.

Many of you have contacted my office expressing your concerns for a particular program or issue. I want you to know that I take all of your thoughts into consideration as I move throughout the budget process. Your opinion is of great value to me and I not only appreciate it, but welcome it.

Everyday I make decisions that have an impact on all Michigan residents, and I believe it is my duty to keep you informed. Please feel free to contact me on any legislative issue you have. Thank you for taking the time to read my newsletter.

Sincerely,

John Pappageorge

Senator Pappageorge Announces MI HEART Health Care Plan

Michigan senators announced a comprehensive plan that will help ensure all Michigan residents have the opportunity to obtain affordable, basic health coverage and will establish incentives to encourage people to lead healthier lives. The Michigan HEART plan, (Michigan Helping Ensure Affordable and Reliable Treatment), was introduced on Wednesday, February 21st in the Michigan State Senate in the form of Senate Bills 278, 280 and 283. "Michigan is one of the most unhealthy states," said Senator John Pappageorge, who is co-sponsoring the package. "We need to do everything possible to encourage Michigan resi-

dents to adopt a healthier way of life. The added benefit is that living healthy will actually help lower the cost of health care as well." A major contributor to the high cost



Senator Pappageorge joins in MI Heart health care plan press conference on February 20, 2007. He is accompanied by (front row left) Senators Patty Birkholtz (R-Sagatuck), Tom George (R-Kalamazoo, (back row left) Alan Sanborn (R-Richmond), Mike Bishop (R-Rochester) and Roger Kahn (R-Saginaw).

of health care in Michigan is the high rate of disease (heart disease, cancer, diabetes). The plan includes the MI HEART Exchange, a marketplace that connects people with insurers and enables them to purchase affordable, basic health care coverage. Through partnering with private insurers, the Exchange will enable subsidized coverage for persons up to 200 percent of the poverty level. Small businesses and other residents will also be able to purchase basic coverage using the Exchange.

Senator Pappageorge Sponsors Resolution to Protect Jobs

Senator John Pappageorge recently sponsored Senate Resolution 12, a resolution to urge Congress to refrain from raising corporate average fuel economy (CAFE) standards. This resolution will help protect Michigan jobs and the Big Three Automakers. "Why increase job killing regulations when a focus on innovation, new technology and a commitment to alternative fuels can achieve the same goals and actually create jobs in Michigan?" said Senator John Pappageorge. The Energy Policy Conservation Act of 1975 implemented CAFE standards for passenger cars and light trucks. While the law is well-

intentioned, the standards have had virtually no impact at all in lowering the country's per capita consumption of gasoline or reducing the nation's thirst for energy. "This is fundamental to our state's future" Pappageorge said. "At a time when Chrysler is forced to cut 13,000 jobs and our domestic auto industry continues to struggle, raising CAFE standards will only further decimate Michigan's already ailing economy." The resolution was referred to the Senate Committee on Energy Policy.



March is Reading Month!

Did you know that March is Reading Month? During this time young children and elementary students across Michigan and around the country will celebrate



the importance of reading. We must encourage older children and adolescents to read as well. In a world full of podcasts, YouTube and text messaging, reading is still the foundation for success in school and life. Our 21st century economy demands well-educated, highly-skilled workers

who are able to learn and adapt throughout their careers. In fact, the pace of our global economy requires lifelong learning. Helping our children to improve their reading ability helps them to fully develop an important skill that will pay dividends throughout their lifetime. To encourage your child to read, try these reading tips suggested by the National Center for Family Literacy:

- Read aloud as a family. Build on your son's or daughter's interests by sharing newspaper or magazine articles
- Use the internet together as a reading source
- Give a bookstore gift certi-

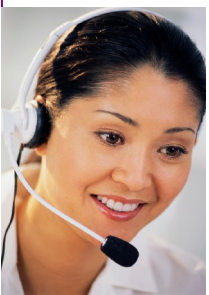
cate or magazine subscription for birthdays and special occasions

- Keep books and newspapers in a prominent place in your home
- Read! Be a role model, and let your youngster see how much you value reading.

In today's fast-changing world, education and lifelong learning are more important than ever.



Have You Heard About 2-1-1?



For too long people have been turned off to state programs because of a complicated system and lack of clear information. Our government is committed to becoming more efficient, while continuing its commitment to serving our state's most vulnerable. A new program is designed to do just that. 2-1-1 is the health and human services equivalent of 9-1-1 to give or get help. Just like 9-1-1, dial 2-1-1 from any landline and you are connected to a live person who

can help you find the resources you need. Cingular Wireless is currently the only wireless provider of this service, however, other wireless service providers may also soon offer 2-1-1. Calls are free to the user, answered 24/7, 365 days a year by professional information and referral specialists. The call centers are nationally accredited and staff is extensively trained and nationally certified. Just a few examples of questions you can get answered are:

- I need help for my child's learning impairment
- I need services to help me find

employment

- I want to volunteer in my community and need resources to get me started
- I need shelter from an abusive spouse

The resources are endless and the price is free. Dial 2-1-1 today to get the information you need.

2-1-1

2007 SENIOR HOTLINES

Here is a list of toll-free numbers to call (at no charge) for facts on a variety of subjects of interest to seniors and their families. Note: numbers are subject to change.



Alzheimer's Association.....1-800-272-3900	8388
American Cancer Society.....1-800-227-2345	Elder Abuse Helpline.....1-800-996-6228
American Council of the Blind.....1-800-424-8666	Energy Assistance.....1-800-292-5650
American Diabetes Association1-800-232-3472	Hill-Burton Info on
American Parkinson's	Free Health Care.....1-800-638-0742
Disease Association.....1-800-223-2732	Hospice.....1-800-331-1620
Arthritis Foundation.....1-800-283-7800	Lawyer Referral.....1-800-968-0738
Auto Repair Complaints.....1-800-292-4204	Legal Hotline for Seniors.....1-800-347-5297
Cancer Information Center1-800-422-6237	Medicare Appeals (Hospital Discharge).....1-800-365-5899
Christopher Reeves	Medicare Inquiry.....1-800-633-4227
Paralysis Foundation1-800-225-0292	Medicare/Medicaid
Consumer Protection Agency.....1-877-765-	Assist. Program.....1-800-803-

Questions or Comments?

If you have any questions or comments regarding information in this newsletter, or wish to be removed from or added to the mailing list, please contact my office at the following information:

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